THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) The textile industry experienced recessionary conditions, especially in 1998-99, essentially on account of fall in demand, in both domestic and international markets, leading to deceleration of production and exports. However, since then there are some indications of revival because production of yarn and cloth during April to September, 1999 has registered an increase of 7% against a decline of about 3% during the corresponding period of previous year and exports have recorded a growth of 2.5% (in dollar terms) as against decline of 0.4% in the corresponding period of previous year.

(b) During the period from October 1, 1997 to September 30, 1999, 129 mills were reportedly closed down.

(c) The Government has taken a number of steps to stimulate demand, reduce cost and strengthen the textile industry. These include rationalisation of the fiscal structure, launching of the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) for providing loans on softer terms; announcing a new 5 year Export Quota Policy effective from 1st January, 2000 to provide for continuity, stability and encourage competition; liberalising export of cotton yarn; lowering the threshold limit of zero duty Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme (EPCG) to Rs. 1 crore for prescribed textile machinery.

Mineral Exploration Fund

*255 SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:—

(a) Whether it is a fact that Government have set up Mineral Exploration Fund?

(b) If so, what are the aims and objectives of fund;

(c) Whether private sector companies can also contribute to this fund; and

(d) If not, whether there is any proposal in this direction, so as to strengthen the fund?

THE MINISTER OF MINES AND MINERALS (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The objective of setting up the Mineral Exploration Fund (MEF) is to promote sustainable activities for exploration and development of minerals other than natural gas, petroleum and atomic minerals.

(c) Yes, Sir. Sources of contribution of the MEF are:

(i) Public Sector Undertakings in Minerals & Metals Sector;

(ii) Institutions and Agencies other than Government; and

(iii) International Aid, either Bilateral or Multilateral.

(d) Question does not arise.

Amendments to the Human Rights Act, 1993

*256 SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Ahmadi Committee have recommended extensive amendments to the Protection of Human Righs Act, 1993 to set right some inadequacies in the law;

(b) if so, the details thereof, separately;

(c) whether Government would bring forward amending legislation to incorporate those modifications; if so, by when; and

(d) if answer to part (c) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in their Annual Report for the year 1993-94 had recommended certain amendments to the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. Thereafter, in 1999 the NHRC suggested another amendment in the Act enabling the transfer of the complaints received by the NHRC to the concerned State Human Rights Commission. The Government has not received any recommendation based on the report of the Ahmadi Committee which was constituted by the NHRC.

(b) The Commission suggested, inter alia, certain amendments relating to the definition of human rights autonomy of the Commission, powers relating to inquiries, steps to be taken after